

Exchange With Reporters in Sequoia National Forest, California July 14, 1992

Presidential Campaign

Q. Mr. President, can you lay the Baker rumors to rest, sir? Can you lay those Baker rumors to rest? Are you going to ask him to return?

The President. The truth is he and I are going fishing. It's pure fishing, pure fishing.

Q. But are you going to ask him to return to the White House or campaign—

Q. Mr. President, what's the most impor-

tant domestic issue besides the economy?

The President. Well, there are so many of them, but education, crime; education, tranquility in the neighborhoods.

Q. Is America and the American economy better off than it was 4 years ago?

The President. Well, some parts of it are.

Note: The exchange began at 11:15 a.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing the Giant Sequoia in National Forests Proclamation in Sequoia National Forest

July 14, 1992

Dale Robertson, thank you, sir. As all of you know, Mr. Robertson is the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. But I would like to take this opportunity not simply to thank him but to thank the other dedicated professionals that work in the Forest Service. And I'm just delighted to be here today and delighted that Bill Reilly, the head of EPA, is with us; that Congressman Bill Thomas, who claims this as part of his own congressional district—proudly proclaims it, brags about it, understandably so—is with us today; Forest Supervisor Sandra Key; and also an old friend, Derrick Crandall, could join us.

Let me begin by acknowledging the hard work and the valuable time being invested in our environment by the likes of Bruce Howard and the Save the Redwoods League, David Magney and the California Native Plant Society, the Audubon Society, the Nature Conservatory. They all do fantastic work in keeping this the way it ought to be.

I understand we have some special guests here. I met one group of them, and these are the kids from R.M. Pyles Boys Camp. They come out here away from it all to learn how to hike and fish and pitch a tent. They learn how to respect themselves and

respect the land. I believe Teddy Roosevelt had these kids in mind when he spoke of the "beautiful gifts" that we've received from nature, gifts that we "ought to hand on as a precious heritage to our children and our children's children."

The fact is these forests, our lakes, and our lands, they are gifts, the commonwealth that we inherited from our parents, that we borrow from our kids. That's the spirit of this agreement that we'll salute here today. Different groups from Government agencies to private organizations have come together, bridging ideological divides in order to forge an agreement that protects our sequoia groves as part of our national legacy, our common heritage, if you will. Whatever name you put on it, our actions are going to speak louder than words. And when words are memories, when we are long gone, these trees will stand.

America has one of the oldest National Forest Systems in the world, the best National Park System in the world, and the best Wildlife Refuge System in the world. And yet, as President, I have said that the best simply is not good enough.

The Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund is a good example. It's helped us invest more than \$200 million each year to improve our fish-